

Report on the activities of the Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales for 2013-2014

Dr Martin Predavec – President RZS NSW



Presented at the Annual General Meeting of the Society on 8 November 2014 at the Australian Museum.

2013-2014 has been a busy year for the society. We have achieved a lot. There have not been a lot of new initiatives, but the work that we have achieved is significant.

Membership

Our membership numbers sit at 1,028. This is very similar to where our numbers were at the end of last year membership year and slightly higher than where we were at November in 2013. This is possibly due to a good response to our membership renewal reminders. The breakdown of members into categories is again relatively consistent with last year (see table below).

Membership type	Number of members
Scientific	311
Ordinary	491
Student	69
Junior	157
TOTAL	1,028

RZS NSW Council

The RZS Council has remained relatively constant through the year. Peter Banks stepped aside as President in March and I took on the role. I would like to thank Peter for his time as president and for now taking on the role of Treasurer. We have one new Council member – Jennifer Clarke from Macquarie University.

At this point I would like to thank Stewart Monti our Executive Officer. This year Stewart has taken on a lot more responsibility as EO than in previous years, for example he now is looking after our membership including renewals. Having Stewart on board is a great asset to the Society.

Finally on the topic of our council, since 2001 Dame Marie Bashir, as Governor of NSW, was Patron of the Society. Royal Patronage is granted by the individual governor and not by the position. Dame Bashir ceased being our patron when she retired from the position of Governor of NSW in October 2014. The new Governor of NSW, His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd) has agreed to be the Patron of the Society.

Financial report

The Honorary Treasurer, Peter Banks, presented the 2013-2014 Financial Report to the Society members

at the Annual General Meeting. At the close of the financial year the Society had total equity of \$594,925, which is an increase of \$78,026 on the previous financial year. Membership fees continue to be the major source of income, while publications are our greatest expense. Overall the returns on investments for the Society were strong.

Thanks to:

Honorary Treasurer: Peter Banks

Publications

2014 marked 100 years of publication of Australian Zoologist. By any measure that is a wonderful feat. Australian Zoologist continues to fill a niche that no other journal fills. The diversity of papers that we receive and publish is outstanding.

This last year we have published three issues, 42 papers and 300 pages. All the papers are available online and through our membership of Crossref we are now able to publish papers online as soon as they are accepted and laid out. This greatly reduces our publication time and is something that authors clearly see as a benefit.

For the last three years Metapress has hosted our publications online. Unfortunately Metapress is closing down in 2015. We have negotiated to move out online hosting to Allen Press. Council looked long and hard at various options for online hosting and felt that Allen Press gave us the best value and the most flexibility. We will aim to make the transition to Allen Press as painless as possible our members.

Thanks to:

Editors: Dan Lunney, Brad Law, Martin Predavec

Editorial Committee: Mike Calver, Pat Hutchings, Peter Banks

Layout: Ros Sherratt

Librarian: JC Herremans

Postage: Noel Tait and JC Herremans.

Whitley Awards

The Whitley Awards were held on 12 September at the Australian Museum. As usual there was an amazing array of books submitted. What really comes out of these awards is the quality of work relating to Australian animals and the depth and range of high quality research that lies behind these Australian publications. The Society plays an important role in recognising the importance of these publications for Australian Zoology.

There were two Whitely medals awarded

- *Tadpoles and Frogs of Australia* – written by Marian Anstis, published by New Holland
- *Australian Longhorn Beetles Vol 1.* by Adam Slipinski and Hermes Escalona, published by ABRs and CSIRO Publishing

The Special Commendation went to Denis Saunders for his lifetime work to Australian zoology and publishing.

Thanks to:

Chair: Noel Tait

Selection Committee: Adele Haythornthwaite, Arthur White, Pauline Ross

Venue: Pat Hutchings and the Australian Museum for the wonderful venue.

Research Grants – EMR

We continued to provide financial support for student and early career researchers through the Ethel Mary Read Research Grants. We received 23 applications from a great range of institutions, all of high standard.

The selection committee had the difficult task of ranking these applications. In the end, all members agreed that two grants should be awarded:

- Georgeanna Story, ANU - Adapting to roads: Can we help wombats survive the vehicle invasion?
- Katherine Moon ANU -Penguin Ectoparasites of the Southern Hemisphere

The criteria used to judge the applications were based on several factors, the scientific quality of the application and its feasibility, student track record and its contribution to animal conservation in Australasia.

Thanks to:

Chair: Pat Hutchings

Selection Committee: Brad Law, Pauline Ross, Cathy Herbert

Research Grants – Paddy Pallin Research Grants

Once again the Society administered the Paddy Pallin Research Grants funded by the Paddy Pallin Foundation and the Foundations for National Parks and Wildlife.

This year there were two grants from each of the two funding bodies.

Paddy Pallin Grants

- **Stephanie Rog** – Monash University - Conservation planning for mangrove forests and their terrestrial vertebrates
- **Amy Northover** – Murdoch University - The ecology of parasite transmission in fauna translocations

FNPW Grants

- **Andrew Olds** – Southern Cross University - Conserving the fish of surf zones: how effective are land and sea reserves?

- **Luciana Ferriera** – University of Western Australia- Tiger shark behaviour revealed by their movement and tissues: implications for ecology and conservation

Thanks to:

Selection committee: Peggy Eby, Peter Banks, Rob Pallin (PPF), Nancy Pallin (PPF), Susanna Bradshaw (FNPW).

Funding: Paddy Pallin Foundation and FNPW for the funding and ongoing support.

RZS Webpages

We recognize that our webpage is an important means of communicating with members of the society. Our current webpage has been difficult to use, both from an end user perspective, but also from the Council perspective. We have been working hard to improve this and I hope that we will have a new page in 2015.

This new web presence should make it much easier for members to find information on the society and also for Council members to update information.

Thanks to:

Ricky Spencer has taken the lead on this and I thank him for it.

Newsletter

We are once again producing newsletters. Two newsletters have been produced this year. This is simply a way to keep members abreast of activities within the Society. Hopefully as it develops it may also be a way for members to provide information to each other.

Thanks to:

Jennifer Clarke has taken this task by the horns and the proof is in the delivery of the newsletters. So thank you Jennifer.

Yearly Forum

We held our yearly forum on 8 November at the Australian Museum. The forum's topic was 'The value of protected areas for fauna conservation' which tied in with the IUCN World Park's Congress held in Sydney the week following the forum. We had a broad range of speakers and a good audience turnout. Papers resulting from the day will be published in a special edition of Australian Zoologist

Thanks to:

Organising committee: Dan Lunney, Pat Hutchings and Chris Dickman

Student career expo

The society in conjunction with Taronga Zoo held a Science Career Expo aimed at students interested in a career related to animals. It was held on 20 September at the Taronga Zoo Lecture Theatre. More than 70 undergraduate and masters students attended and heard from a variety of speakers about animal related scientific careers. Speakers shared insights from their profession, gave tips on working in that field and strategies to kick start their career. The common themes were the power of

volunteering, the need of good mentors and being brave and taking opportunities if they arise. The feedback from the day has been very positive.

Thanks to:

Paul Maguire and his colleagues at Taronga Zoo for organising. Thanks also to the speakers who gave up their day to present: Catherine Herbert, Inke Falkner, Jo Wisniewski, George Wilson, Brendan Smith, Stephen Jackson, Ben Hope, and Josie Stokes.

In summary, the Society continues with a large, strong and vibrant membership, we are financially viable, and we are making a significant contribution towards meeting the aims of the society – we are advancing the science of zoology and helping to conserve the indigenous animals of Australasia. We are doing this through our publications, the research grants we offer and administer and through public fora like our annual forum and the student day.

Fellows of RZS NSW

One of the functions of the Council of the RZS NSW is to appoint as a Fellow of the Society any Scientific Member who has rendered distinguished service to the Society or to Australian zoology (see text box).

The Council of the RZS NSW shall have power from time to time to appoint as a Fellow of the Society any Scientific Member who has rendered distinguished service to the Society or to Australian zoology and to determine the rights and privileges of such Fellows from time to time.

Fellows have been appointed since the earliest days of the RZS (the first in 1887) in recognition of scientists who have made outstanding contributions to zoological life in Australia, either through their research or their work in promoting the aims and objective of the RZS. They are appointed on nomination by the Council of the Royal Zoological Society of NSW and entitled to the use of the post-nominal title FRZS.

In the 135-year history of the RZS there have been fewer than 100 RZS Fellows elected.

In 2014 the Council unanimously agreed to the appointment of Peter Banks as a Fellow of the Society. In 2013 the Council appointed Adele Haythornthwaite and Charley Krebs as Fellows. The text of the presentations are given below.

Associate Professor Peter Banks

Peter Banks is well known to members of the Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales. His appointment as a Fellow of the Society by the Council is based both on his contribution to the Society and his role in the broader zoological community.

Peter has been a member of the RZS NSW Council since 1998. He has held various roles on Council including Honorary Secretary from 2002 to 2007, President from 2007 to 2014, and currently is Honorary Treasurer. Peter is on the editorial board of *Australian Zoologist* and has

contributed towards the organization and publishing of several recent forums and their proceedings: *Science Under Siege*, *Dangerous Ideas in Zoology* and the *Camera Trapping Colloquium* (jointly with Australasian Wildlife Management Society). Peter has also organized student career days and has served as a panel member evaluating the Paddy Pallin Research Grants.

On the academic front, Peter has made a sustained and distinguished mark with his research on the behavioural ecology of alien species, as well as on chemical communication, and urban ecology. He has followed these topics since his PhD from the University of Sydney in 1997, through his postdoctoral studies at the University of Turku in Finland and through his time at the University of NSW where he worked his way up to become an associate professor. He is now continuing this work at the University of Sydney where he is Associate Professor in Conservation Ecology. Peter has published well over 100 zoological papers during his career so far. He is a sought-after conference speaker, and has presented two



Peter Banks receiving his FRZS citation from Chris Dickman (Photograph: Dan Lunney)



Peter Banks with his family, Jayne Tipping and Harry Banks, receiving his FRZS citation (Photograph: Dan Lunney)

invited talks at international meetings this year alone. He is developing the next generation of zoologists – almost single-handedly! – through his supervision of students, with 21 PhD graduates and 29 honours graduates so far.

Peter is also a member of the NSW Scientific Committee constituted under the NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act. He is on the editorial board of *Oecologia* and *Behavioural Ecology and Sociobiology*.

Peter's record, both within the Society and within the broader zoological community, speaks for itself. His approach to his work is always good humoured and characterized by his very unassuming nature. In accepting this appointment as Fellow, Peter said: "I'm honoured to be considered. Looking through the list of recipients I'm not sure I'm worthy to be included in such company". The Council of the Society unanimously thinks that Peter is indeed very worthy to be included in such company, and it is with great pleasure that I ask Peter to step forward to accept his award.

Citation written by Martin Predavec and Chris Dickman and presented by Chris Dickman

Dr Adele Haythornthwaite

The Society has two reasons for acknowledging individuals with an FRZS: their contribution to the Society and because of their contributions to zoology. It is on the first of these two criteria that Dr Adele Haythornthwaite is made a Fellow of the Royal Zoological Society of NSW, in short FRZS. You are invited to use this after your name if you so choose.

Consider the response by fellow RZS Councillor Noel Tait when asked about her contributions to the Whitley book awards: "She magnificent, she is an angel".

When the call went out just before the 2013 Annual scientific meeting for volunteers for the essential, but inconspicuous, job of time-keeping, Adele immediately volunteered. Adele has always worked tirelessly for the benefit of the Society, much of it in the background, beaver away out of the spotlight.

Adele's contribution to Council of the RZS NSW has been invaluable. A simple example of Adele's gracious contribution to the active functioning of the RZS was her willingness to be the Secretary of the Society – a task that is lots of work and little glory. However, she was high profile in her sustained contribution to the wildlife series of monthly talks, held at the University of Sydney, which she organised and chaired.

Members and outsiders see the high profile items, such as the publications and the Forum, but what is not obvious is the monthly meetings of the Society and the work that has to be done between meetings for the Society. The award of an FRZS shows a profound appreciation by the Society of an on-going and tireless contribution, and it is not a mere moment in the spotlight with a thank you at an AGM. It is a lifelong recognition, and that becomes clear with the initials FRZS after your name.

When Adele was advised that she was to be a recipient of this award earlier the week leading up to the AGM, her response was: "Gosh, I feel very honoured! Thank you, and the Council, that was very unexpected, and I am deeply appreciative. It has been and continues to be a

pleasure to be a part of the RZS council, and it is lovely to be rewarded for doing something I enjoy!" That response is simply confirmation that Adele is part of a team, and enjoys the work and the rewards of a team effort.

The day a society stops acknowledging those who work for it in the essential administrative, organisational tasks, and behind-the-scenes jobs as the need arises, it is the day that a society begins to crumble. Adele's contributions have helped keep the RZS a vibrant society, which is now 134 years since it began in 1879.

Being a zoologist herself, with a PhD gained under the supervision of Council Member and former President, Chris Dickman, means that the detail of what the Society is doing, publishing, the forums, and presenting awards for EMR and Paddy Pallin is clear and Adele can make telling contribution to each one of the Society's functions. Thus, with biological training and a career in the biological world at University of Sydney, Adele has an ideal combination of attributes for a forward-looking zoological society, despite its great age.

Congratulations on behalf of the Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales on becoming a Fellow of the Royal Zoological Society of NSW.

Citation written by Peter Banks, Dan Lunney and Chris Dickman and presented by Peter Banks



Adele Haythornthwaite listening to her FRZS citation being delivered. (Photograph: Dan Lunney)

Professor Charley Krebs

The science of zoology depends on the thoughtful and sustained contributions by zoologists to the discipline, and in Charley Krebs' case, his contribution to the science of zoology has inspired generations of zoologists. The Society has two reasons for acknowledging individuals

with an FRZS: their contribution to the Society and to the science of zoology. It is for the latter that this FRZS is conferred. Charley Krebs has contributed to the Society as a zoologist, for example, his paper at the 2013 forum on Dangerous Ideas. His contribution is also universal.

The title of his 2008 book, 'The Ecological World View' (CSIRO) could be written by only very few ecologists. It is an outstanding book, along with his five editions of his text book: 'Distribution and Abundance of Animals: An Experimental Approach'. The compass of his knowledge, the skill in its presentation, and the relevance to both science and conservation elevates zoology, and the specialist area of ecology, to be an essential element in any view of how to live sustainably.

Charley Krebs is one of the world's great scientists.

However, he has his failings. Consider this recent email exchange when Charley submitted his abstract for the 2013 forum: '10 Possible Limitations of Current Ecological Theory'. The opening sentence read 'From 46 years of observing, reading, and writing about ecology, I try here to list some of the concerns I have about the current state of ecology.' One of us (DL) replied: "The only surprise in your email was the figure of 46 years of thinking about ecological matters. I thought it was a bit longer. In the early 1970s I was reading your vole papers, and you must have been thinking about such matters for a decade at that point." Charley replied: "Dan - if you can edit it, my arithmetic is wrong, so it should be 56 years. Gad I am getting old... Charley." So, there we have it, 56 years as a working ecologist, which modesty, or arithmetic error, or something else made 46 years. A failing, hardly, but it makes us all blush to see such a record, and we'll overlook the numbers.

This raises a more interesting point – Charley Krebs has been a major player in ecological thinking and writing for almost as long as the discipline has been around. Charley Krebs became an original contributor to ecological theory through his imaginative work with voles in the 1960s. His latest book is on rodents and the interesting ecological problems that they pose. Thus, while he writes text books and holds forth on the state of the world, and what we should do about it, he has remained immersed in the discipline of zoology and some of world's most unloved animals, the rodents.

The following exchange between Peter Banks, as RZS President, and Charley Krebs captures the essence of what an FRZS means and it also shows the strong attachment Charley Krebs has to Australia and Australian zoologists.

"Dear Charley,

The Royal Zoological Society of NSW has a special section of membership, the Fellows, representing individuals who have made distinguished service to the Society or to Australian Zoology. Fellows of the RZS are on nomination only and we do not appoint new fellows ever year. Since 1887 there have only been about 85 or so Fellows appointed and a full list can be found here. Fellows of the RZS are entitled to use the post-nominal title FRZS.

The council has unanimously agreed to appoint you as a Fellow of the Royal Zoological Society of NSW for distinguished service to Australian zoology. This nomination reflects your significant and sustained

contribution to the ecology of Australia's unique ecosystems and wildlife as well as your contributions to conservation and wildlife management globally.

Congratulations!

We'll award you with the honour at the AGM on Saturday and we wished you could have made it to accept on the day (that is if you're willing to accept!). But we'll send you a copy of the full citation, which will be published in Australian Zoologist

All the best

Peter"

And Charley's reply:

"Dear Peter,

My goodness this is an unexpected honour and I am most grateful and happy to accept of course. My only regret is not to be there in Sydney to attend the conference and accept this honour. So I thank all that have engineered this through the Society, which contains so many of my favorite ecologists.

With thanks, Best, Charley"

With all this content read to the AGM of the Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales on 2 November 2013, the assembled gathering applauded the conferring of the award.

Citation prepared by Peter Banks, Chris Dickman, Dan Lunney and Martin Predavec and presented by Dan Lunney.



Charley Krebs, not receiving his FRZS citation, but out trapping animals. (Photograph: Alice Kenney)